

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 053087

EXDIS, FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

FOL RPT ISLAMABAD 2326 ACTION SECSTATE 9 MAR 77 QUOTE

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 2326

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PK, MNUC, PARM

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR DISCUSSION WITH BHUTTO

REF: ISLAMABAD 2291

1. BHUTTO DID NOT GIVE ANYTHING AWAY IN HIS PRESS
CONFERENCE REPLIES TO FOREIGN NEWSMEN'S QUESTIONS ABOUT
NUCLEAR ISSUES. ALTHOUGH HIS REMARKS ABOUT DISCUSSING THE
FRANCO-PAK AGREEMENT "THREADBARE" IN FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH
THE USG CAN BE READ AS FORESHADOWING ANOTHER EFFORT TO
SELL US ON THE FORMULA OF EXPANDED SAFEGUARDS, AT LEAST THE
PM DID NOT USE THE OCCASION, AS HE HAS OTHERS, TO INSIST

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THAT THE AGREEMENT MUST BE IMPLEMENTED. THAT, AT LEAST,
IS MILDLY ENCOURAGING.

2. AS HE HINTED IT WOULD BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN GOT UNDER
WAY, BHUTTO'S BIG ELECTION VICTORY SHOULD ALLOW HIM GREATER
ROOM FOR MANEUVER AS HE PREPARES FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH US.
ALTHOUGH THE OPPOSITION HAS DENOUNCED THE VOTING AS FRAUDULENT,

AND HAS ANNOUNCED ITS DECISION TO BOYCOTT TOMORROW'S PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, WE SUSPECT THAT THE GENERAL VERDICT WILL BE THAT THE PM'S VICTORY, IF NOT ITS MAGNITUDE, WAS A GENUINE ONE. HE HAS IN ANY EVENT DEMONSTRATED THAT HE CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE PAKISTAN POLITICAL SCENE, AND HE SHOULD HAVE LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH ANY NEAR-TERM CHALLENGE THE DISHEARTENED OPPOSITION SEEKS TO MOUNT AGAINST HIM IN THE STREETS OR ELSEWHERE. HIS POWER IN THE PPP ITSELF IS ALSO AS GREAT AS EVER: HE CAN RIGHTLY SAY TO HIS PARTYMEN THAT IT WAS HE WHO WAS THE ARCHITECT AND MANAGER OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL WINS, AND THAT THEY CONTINUE TO OWE THEIR POLITICAL STANDING TO HIM.

3. WE SHOULD IN ANY EVENT ACT IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM AS IF HIS VICTORY WILL HAVE MADE IT EASIER FOR HIM TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE HOWEVER THAT HE WILL STILL FACE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PROBLEMS SHOULD HE AGREE TO POSTPONE THE REPROCESSING DEAL, AND THAT HE WILL REGARD HIMSELF AS THE BEST JUDGE OF THOSE PROBLEMS.

4. AS WE APPROACH OUR DISCUSSIONS, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR US TO RECALL BHUTTO'S ORIGINAL MOTIVATION IN DECIDING TO GO FOR THE REPROCESSING PLANT. AS WE'VE POINTED OUT MANY TIMES BEFORE, THESE HAVE TO DO WITH PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE RELATED ISSUE OF ITS NATIONAL PRESTIGE. OUR BEST, WE WOULD SAY OUR ONLY SERIOUS, CHANCE OF COMING OUT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS SUCCESSFULLY AS IF WE CAN PERSUADE BHUTTO (A) THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE SECURITY CONCERNS THAT PAKISTAN FEELS; (B) THAT WE RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE WAKE OF THE INDIAN SECRET

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PNE THESE CONCERNS FOUND AN OUTLET IN THE SEARCH FOR A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES OPTION; AND (C) THAT OUR APPROACH TO THE REPROCESSING PLANT ISSUE IS GENUINELY INFLUENCED BY OUR APPRECIATION OF PAKISTAN'S DIFFICULT SECURITY SITUATION.

IN DEALING WITH BHUTTO, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE PROJECT AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT PAKISTAN'S SECURITY PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS ARE AND THAT IN THIS CONTEXT WE ARE WILLING TO TAKE CERTAIN STEPS ON OUR SIDE. OUR POSITION SHOULD BE THAT OF A WILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH THESE CONCERNS RATHER THAN A PROCESS OF A MECHANICAL TRADE-OFF OR QUID PRO QUO.

5. THIS SAME CONCERN AND UNDERSTANDING CAN BE FURTHER UNDERSCORED BY OUR TAKING AS SYMPATHETIC A LINE AS POSSIBLE TOWARDS PAKISTANI INTEREST IN SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR NON-NUCLEAR STATES AND THE SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE PROPOSAL.

6. BY THE SAME TOKEN, WE CONSIDER IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT PROPOSALS WHICH IGNORE BHUTTO'S REAL MOTIVATION IN SEEKING

THE REPROCESSING PLANT WILL HAVE ANY SERIOUS PROSPECT OF
WINNING HIM OVER. WE HAVE IN MIND HERE PROPOSALS WHICH
WOULD "TAKE BHUTTO AT HIS WORD," FOCUS EXCLUSIVELY ON HIS
STATED REASONS FOR ACQUIRING THE FACILITY, AND OFFER
ECONOMIC AND ENERGY PACKAGES. THESE WILL BE USEFUL IN
ADDITION TO SECURITY INGREDIENTS, AND COULD BE PARTICULARLY
HELPFUL AS SUPPLEMENTING ANY ANNOUNCED PACKAGE, E.G. US
PARTICIPATION IN GUARANTEEING PAKISLEN A NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY
ARRANGED PRIMARILY BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND FRANCE AS PART OF
A FORMULA WHICH INCLUDES THE INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF THE
REPROCESSING FACILITY. BUT WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THEY
CANNOT ON THEIR OWN TURN THE TRICK.
BYROADE

UNQUOTE VANCE

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